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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001891

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DEPT FOR DRL/AE WENDY SILVERMAN, EUR/CARC LANE BAHL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [OSCE](#) [PHUM](#) [AJ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AZERBAIJAN

REF: A. SECSTATE 99391

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1598

Classified By: Acting Polcouns Kelly Degnan, reasons 1.4, b, d

[1](#)1. (C) We delivered reftel A points to MFA South Caucasus Desk Officer Yavuz Kul July 20. Kul expressed the GOT's appreciation for the careful approach adopted by the United States towards Azerbaijan, and pledged to convey our points to his principals and to the Turkish Embassy in Baku.

[1](#)2. (C) Kul said Turkey is under no illusions about democratic conditions in Azerbaijan, but is taking a measured approach. Turkey does not want to agitate the current government and has, therefore, not aligned itself with EU declarations. "Our relations are different," he asserted. The "Friends of Azerbaijan" demarche, he said, struck the right "let's help" tone. Turkey also recognizes the preliminary measures taken by the GOAJ to address media freedom concerns, and wants to further encourage them. Turkey's focus, he said, is on training presidential staff and other key government officials. He agrees that the EU is well placed to carry out further training through the European Neighborhood Policy, and that the Commission should, therefore, open a full mission in Baku. Turkey could be a valuable partner for the EU, given its traditional closeness to Azerbaijan.

[1](#)3. (C) Kul told us Turkey privately has told the GOAJ that the current situation can't last forever. Turkey is stressing that -- despite flaws in the recent parliamentary elections -- Armenia has taken a big step forward in its democratic development. The democratic deficit Azerbaijan faces vis a vis Armenia will hinder its ability to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh (N-K) issue successfully. MFA Director General for Africa, Asia and Pacific Bilateral Affairs Suha Umar expressed these same concerns to DAS Bryza during their June 14 meeting (ref B).

[1](#)4. (C) Kul, who has served in Georgia, believes that President Aliyev is constrained from making significant openings on media freedom and democracy. High economic growth is benefiting only the elite, to the growing frustration of many citizens. With N-K negotiations deadlocked, and presidential elections in 2008, even limited democratization will create new centers of power opposed to the government. While he believes that a genuine opposition will, eventually, take root, for now, there is none that Turkey has confidence in. In Azerbaijan's clannish political scene, Turkey wishes to avoid misunderstandings and not appear to be warming to government opponents. In this regard, Turkish officials have not applied for access to observe the trial of former Economic Development Minister Aliyev and his brother.

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